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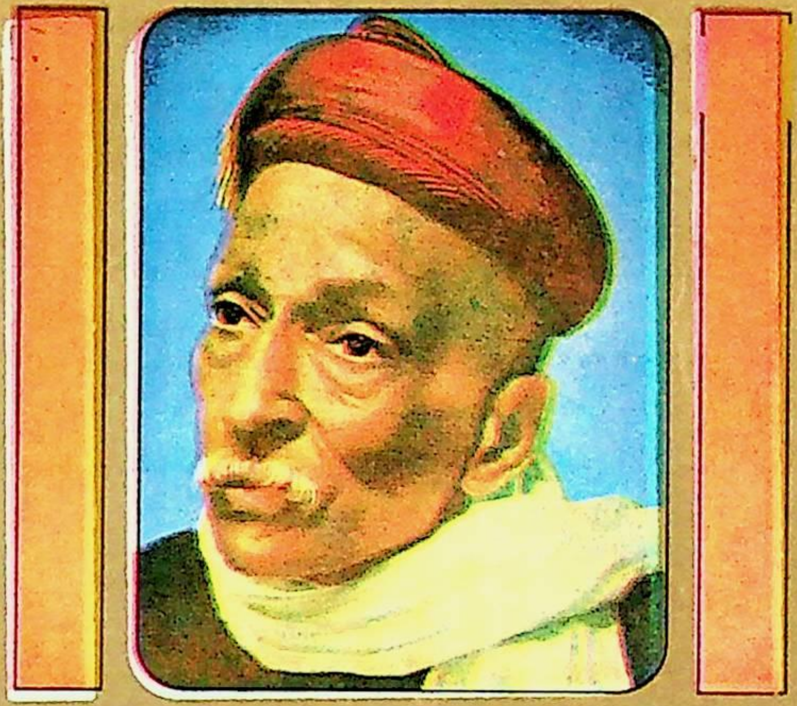

PATHWAY TO GOD

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DEVOTED TO RELIGION, PHILOSOPHY, MYSTICISM & SCIENCE OF YOGA

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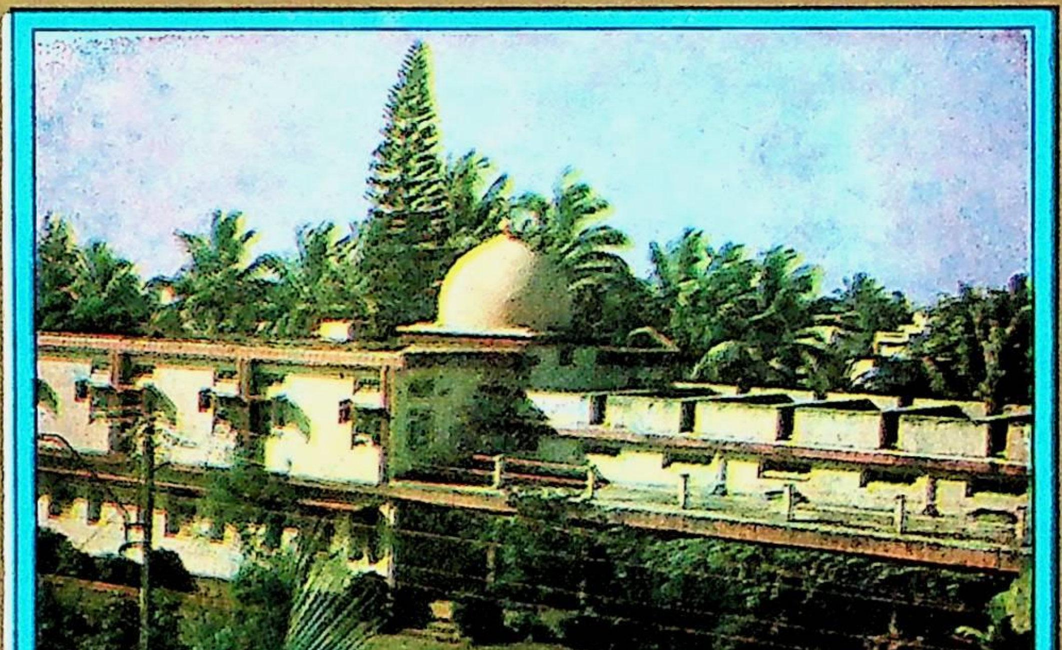

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ONE WORLD
ONE HUMANITY

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PATHWAY TO GOD

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Prayer to Lord Rudra Shiva

(Stanzawise Translation in English)

नमो मन्त्रिणे वाणिजाय कक्षाणां पतये नमः ॥१०॥

I salute the Lord who inspires commerce and looks after the agricultural lands.

नमो भुवन्तये वारिवस्कृतायौषधीनां पतये नमो ॥११॥

I salute the Lord who widens the spread of agricultural lands and who promotes growth of medicinal plants.

नमः उच्चैर्घोषायाक्रन्दयते पत्तीनां पतये नमः ॥१२॥

I salute the Lord with the loudest of voice and who commands the land army with his loud voice.

नमः कृत्स्नवीताय धावते सत्वनांपतये नमः ॥१३॥

I salute the Lord who rushes with encircling army and who protects and looks after the virtuous and the good.

नमः सहमानाय निव्याधिन आ व्याधिनीनां पतये नमः ॥१॥

I salute the Lord who is benign as well as accurate archer and who is the Lord of all archers.

नमः ककुभाय निषङ्गिणे स्तेनानां पतये नमः ॥२॥

I salute the Lord sitting on the highest seat (with sword in hand) and who is also the controller of thieves.

❑❑

Thus Spake Gurudev...

I am a firm believer in the manifold activities of a nation, supplementing, instead of contradicting one another. I hold that when a nation rises, it rises from all points of view. The History of England at the time of Elizabeth, or the history of Maharashtra at the time of Shivaji, amply bears out the fact that when a nation rises, it attempts all enterprises. We must have scientists as well as philosophers, men who go in for action, and men who sit down to contemplate, people who devote themselves to social regeneration as well as those who care for personal development.

(In "A Vindication of Indian Philosophy")

❑ ❑

If we make a comparative study of the philosophies and religions of the world, and especially of the lives and teachings of those, who, in the various stages of humanity and in different ages and lands, have walked on the path of God, we shall see that there are certain broad characterstics common to the pathway which they have all trodden in the attainment of God. These might, for convenience sake, be summarised under five heads. First, there are certain incentives which prompt men to spiritual life. Then, there is the question of moral and spiritual preparation which they must tackle before they can hope to advance on the Pathway. Thirdly, they have to keep before themselves certain exemplars of conduct and attainment which they must necessarily follow. This they cannot do unless they have defined to themselves, both theoretically and practically the nature and functions of God in relation to the exemplars above-mentioned. When the relationship between the exemplars and God has been defined, they have to tread the path themselves, before they can be convinced about the reality of the experiences of those who have gone before them. Finally after having walked on the pathway for a long time, and through travails and turmoils of body and mind, of nature and society, they can envisage to themselves certain land-marks, certain lamp-posts, which will help them to walk with courage and confidence on the pathway to God and attain to the highest ideal they have been seeking.

(Constructive Survey of Upanisadic Philosophy p.17)

❑ ❑

EDITORIAL

Right Orientation and Firm Determination

Right orientation and firm determination are needed for furtherance of any career in life. Whether a student wants to develop his educational career or a yogi to reach the Samadhi state in meditation, for both, the above two qualities are essential. They are equally important for a professional or a business man. No doubt, they are eminently visible in the careers of renowned social, administrative and political leaders as well as army generals. One has to be sure of the track one has to follow in his life to achieve his pre-determined goal. Our scriptures say संशयात्मा विनश्यति। that is, a vicillating mind invites its own defeat. For the beginning to the end, a man of career may have to make course-corrections whenever needed to keep him on the right track. He has to introspect to find out whether he is on the chosen path and not going astray.

When a satellite is shot off from the earth into the sky, corrections are needed till it is in the right slot in the orbit, eventhough the original calculations correctly predict the final position in the orbit. Why the corrections are required ? Because, on the way, the gravitational and magnetic fields actually experienced differ from the values originally assumed. Even the earth's magnetic field doesn't have a constant value.

At times it varies erratically from place to place. Similar may be the conditions from other planets & stars on the path of the satellite.

A man's course through the life career is no different. The field of circumstances which he experiences may not be according to his mental projections originally envisaged and may lead to even large unplanned deviations. Introspection and awareness of the goal are essential to keep oneself on the right course. Thus right orientation and firm determination are essential qualities for every man who wants to keep himself on the right course towards his goal. History is replete with examples of success and failures due to awareness or lack of either of these two qualities.

In the great Mahabharat war, Lord Shrikrishna was determined that the truth should ultimately win over the forces of deceipt and injustice. Pandavas who were on the side of truth did not have a favourable field of circumstances. They had to pass through many inclement and adverse situations to which they would have almost succumbed. But because of Lord Shrikrishna's guidance and course corrections, they won despite the presence of mightier and seasoned warriors on the opposite side and Shri Krishna's vow not to take the weapon himself. He only did the duty of charioteer for Arjuna.

Adi Shankaracharya who was a yogi, a learned man, a skilled debator and religious seeker won the country back to the devotion to God, the backbone of the original faith of the Bhagwat Dharma, shaken by the apparent atheism of Gautam Buddha's teachings and the stirring appeal generated amongst even the high caste learned pundits, because of the humane and compassionate attitude in his speeches towards every soul on the background of the harsh orthodoxy then prevalent in the society.

In later history, Chhatrapati Shivaji showed uncommon firmness of determination and orientation towards the final goal of independence and won the battles against mighty muslim kings with a high sense of battle strategies though overwhelmed by large armies of the enemy.

In recent history, Jawaharlal Nehru, though a successful architect of modern India, lost the first battle immediately after independence, waged by the militants-orientated Pakistani army in Kashmir due to vacillation though assured of victory by the army generals. He also lost the 1962 Chinese war due of lack of proper orientation as well as determination.

Sardar Patel, the then Home minister immediately after independence, could unify the country into one nation by merging all the states who owed allegiance to the British Raj because of his tactful handling and firm determination.

Indira Gandhi, the then P.M. won the 1971 war against Pakistan with firm determination and well-oriented planning, but could not regain Kashmir due to what can be termed as vacillation.

In American history, the firm determination and right orientation of President Abraham Lincoln could establish the principle of Unity, Liberty & Fraternity by abolishing the slavery of the black people. Again, Later on, the determination of President John F. Kennedy to get admission of Negro boy to a white school against the wishes of the state governor even by sending army trops to dismiss the governor, upheld the glory of the American democracy.

Swami Vivekanand was a youth who refused to believe in existence of God, till Ramakrishna Paramhansa gave him a face to face divine vision of Goodess Kali. Since then, Vivekanand never looked back. He became a monk in the Ramakrishna order, was fired by spiritual and religious zeal, preached Hinduism as the universal religion & won laurels at the world conference of religions in USA in 1893. Back home, he preached active life for the Youth in the cause of the poor & downtroddeen and work for building a strong nation and founded the Ramakrishna mission to work towards the goal.

The life of Yogi Arvind was different. His parents wanted him to join the Indian Civil Service under British Raj & sent him to England. He passed the exam. with honours and back home, he became a revolutionary in the cause of the Indian Independence movement. He was arrested and put in police lock-up in a bomb case. While in lock-up, he had a vision of Lord Shrikrishna who told him that he will be released and after that he should do the work he has reserved for him. After release, he went to Pondicherry and started his spiritual work from his ashram. He predicted that India will get independence years before the actual day of independence dawned.

Saint Dnyaneshwar was born a yogi with divine enlightment. His parents & the whole family was persecuted and treated as an outcast by the orthodox society on grounds of flimsy social traditions. His guru and elder brother Nivruttinath advised him to go through the suffering mutely and concentrate on rendering Bhagwadgeeta in local Marathi language. He also wrote the other works viz. Amrutanubhav and Changdeo Pasashti. Ultimately he left the body in Samadhi state at Alandi at the very young age of twenty. His life was an embodiment of firm determination and divine orientation.

Shri Samarth Ramdas Swami led a life aloof from the society to seek God-realisation with devotion to Prabhu Shri Ramachandra. After realisation, he asked the youth to worship Hanuman and build a strong body to fight the muslim rulers. He was a contemporary of Chhatrapati Shivaji with whom he was in contact and correspondence. He produced the valuable epitome of Dasa-bodha for those on the path of God-realisation.

Gondawalekar Maharaj was God-oriented from his childhood. When he was twelve years of age, he walked two thousand miles from Gondawale to Calcutta to see Ramakrishna Paramhansa and request him to be his Guru and ordain him in the path of God. Ramakrishna Paramhansa was astonished at the firm determination of the young boy and embraced him. But told him that his Guru is somebody else, however, he will be successful in his aspirations. Later on, he found his Guru in Tukamai Maharaj near his place. After realisation through worship of Prabhu Shri Ramachandra, he helped many aspirants on pathway to God, through Nama-japa.

Gurudeo Dr. R. D. Ranade was a philosopher saint of the twentieth century. He took up an academic career, was a scholar of high calibre, became professor & head of the dept. of philosophy and then vice-chancellor of Allahabad University. He wrote many scholarly books on spiritualism especially on Upanishads, Bhagwadgeeta and saints of India, for which he was praised and acclaimed by scholars all over India and abroad. He founded his ashram in Nimbal and an Academy of Comparative Philosophy and Religion at Belgaum for the spread of knowledge & spirituality. All through his life, he was dogged by ill-health but his determination and God-orientation never swerved from the path of attainment and spread of knowledge and Realisation.

Despite the long array of great men, saints and philosophers of firm determination and right orientation, the Indian society shows deplorable lack of determination, lack of orientation, lack of strength of mind and clear thinking. Even the basic tenets of Hinduism viz. truthfulness, brotherhood and responsible dutifulness have not taken roots in the society. The blinkers of family interest do not allow universal brotherhood to become a social virtue.

Bhakti i.e. devotion to God is not taken in the right spirit. It is more of an external, superficial and ceremonial participation rather than the true affection for God as a quality of the heart. True spirit of Bhakti will produce a man of virtue and brotherhood. Though there is an upsurge of so-called Bhakti, the society is mired in large scale corruption, with family benefits in terms of wealth as the sole aim of life. The right philosophy of life is missing.

Bhagwadgeeta should be seen in its whole aspect and not piece meal as an instrument of spirituality or a thesis for knowledge or as a means for ritualistic devotional worship or a commentary on social behaviour, but as a holistic recipe for practice in its entirity by for each individual in order to build a live, vibrant society of brotherhood, which can act as one mind with right orientation in national interest. Philosophy cannot exist without a firm base of society with capable constituents.

The philosophers, social & religious leaders, educationists, professionals & business men have to consider this for their own behaviour and find out ways & means to engender the same in others, without which there is no remedy for the present state of degeneration of this society, except for a stern armylike governance.

❑❑

ASTROLOGY & SCIENTISTS

1) Hippocrates, the father of modern medicine wrote long before christ that a doctor who did not know astrology had no right to call himself a doctor.

2) When Sir Isaac Newton was brought before a commission for his continued practice of astrology and alchemy, he maintained his famous stance "Sir I studied the subject, you have not."

3) Astrology is a science in itself and contains an illuminating body of knowledge.

– Albert Einstein

4) In his book "Astrology - Evidence of Science", Percy Seymore, a British Astro-physicist and director of an astronomical observatory, alleges that an infant starts getting magnetic sensory signals from the planets even before birth.

(Continued from last issue)

Śankarācārya's Ātmaboḍha

(Sanskrit Script followed by English translation)

Brahman is joy / bliss. The very nature of Brahman is pure bliss. Brahman is eternal. Hence eternal joy is the nature of Brahman; joy is not incidental to the Brahman. Brahman is permanent joy.

Brahman is true. That which never changes or swerves from its nature is true. Brahman being changeless is true.

Brahman is of the nature of knowledge; it is cidrūpa, saṁvidrūpa. It is not non-sentient.

Brahman is non-dual (advaya). It is without a second. It is one, unique.

Brahman is infinite (ananta). The word "anta' in "ananta' can be taken in two senses thus :-

(1) Anta :- end, destruction. Brahman being imperishable is endless, deathless, and is not subject to destruction. (2) Anta :- boundary, limitation. Brahman is without any boundaries or limitation. The things in the world have threefold limitation :- (a) limitation of place (deśa-pariccheda) e.g. a thing is in some place but not in other places. (b) limitation of time (kāla-pariccheda). e.g. a thing exists during some period, but not in other periods. (c) limitation of things (vastu-pariccheda) : e.g. a thing is present in some things but not present in other things. Brahman is free from all these there limitations. It is all-pervasive.

The word Brahman is derived from the root "Bṛṁh" which means to grow. Brahman is that which grows more than anything else. There is nothing bigger / larger than Brahman. Brahman is the biggest / largest of all. Hence Brahman is the highest or supreme (para).

● ● ●

What happens when the constant contemplation namely "I am Brahman" becomes steady / firm is described in the next 37th Verse.

(37)

एवं निरंतरंकृत्वा ब्रह्मैवाहमस्मीति वासना ।
हरत्यविद्या-विक्षेपान् रोगानिव रसायनम् ॥३७॥

When such constant / continuous contemplation is profound, the conviction namely "I am Brahman only" removes the effects/projections of the Nescience, as a medicine removes diseases (37).

Explanation :- A spiritual aspirant is to constantly meditate that he is Brahman only. The body may be in any condition or may be doing anything; The conviction that the aspirant is Brahman must be maintained or sustained or must remain firm. Due to such constant contemplation, the individual soul gets identical with Brahman, on the analogy of a bee and an[46-A] insect.

As seen already, there was initially ignorance of Brahman. Due to the power of projection of Nescience, there appeared the world, the body, and the so-called individual soul. Now that very nescience has been destroyed by the knowledge of Brahman namely "I myself am Brahman". Naturally the effects of the Nescience are automatically removed. i.e. the effects of the nescience no more affect the individual soul who has realised his identity with Brahman. He is now freed from the clutches of Nescience.

• • •

The method in which the Self is to be meditated upon is explained in the following Verses Nos.38-39.

(38)

विविक्त-देश आसीनो विरागो विजितेंद्रियः ।
भावयेदेकमात्मानं तमनंतमनन्यधीः ॥३८॥

He (= the spiritual aspirant) who is devoid of love/attachment and who has conquered his senses should sit in a lonely place, and with intellect concentrated on nothing but Ātman should ruminate/meditate on that only one infinite Ātman (38).

Explanation :- A person who has acquired the fourfold equipment (sādhana-catuṣṭaya) is qualified to study the philosophy of Monism-alone (See Verse No. 1). For realisation of Ātman, the Upaniṣads have laid down hearing, thinking and meditating. So after the hearing and thinking, the spiritual aspirant has to practise meditation (nididhyāsa). As he has discarded the desire for the enjoyment of fruits of actions in this and the next world, he is free from desire for objects, he is free from attachment to worldly objects. As he possesses śama and dama, he has conquered his mind and the senses. Thus he is now in a position to start and practise meditation.

For meditation he should select a solitary place where there would be no disturbing external sound or the sound of stormy wind, where there would be no trouble from various animals, where there would be no trouble from strong light or fire, and so on. Then he has to cultivate the habit of remaining in a lonely place. He must feel at ease in that solitary place. Otherwise loneliness becomes a disturbing factor.

Remaining in a comfortable position of the body, he should meditate on the Self. He is to concentrate his mind-intellect complex on the Self. He should then constantly contemplate "I am that infinite Self. I am not different from the Self. Ātman and I are one and the same."

• • •

(39)

आत्मन्येवाखिलं दृश्यं प्रविलाप्य धिया सुधीः ।
भावयेदेकमात्मानं निर्मलाकाशवत् सदा ॥३९॥

A spiritual aspirant whose intellect (-mind) is good i.e. pure should, with the help of his intellect, merge the whole visible world in the Self, and should always meditate on the Ātman who is one and who is (clear/pure) like the clear sky (39).

Explanation :- The entire visible world is denoted by the words "all visible". A spiritual aspirant, on the basis of the Vedic statements and instructions of the spiritual teacher, has come to know that the universe is superimposed on the basis (adhi ṣṭhāna) of the Self, that the universe is only an illusory appearance and that the universe has no separate and independent existence apart from that of Ātman, that there is nothing except Ātman. As soon as this fact is imprinted on the mind, for the spiritual aspirant, then there is loss / disappearance of the visible world; for him all is Brahman / Ātman only (sarvaṁ khalvidaṁ Brahma). Knowledge of Ātman convinces him that the existence of the world is illusory and the illusion disappears as soon as the basis (adhi ṣṭhāna) of the illusion is known, as the knowledge of the conch removes the illusory appearance of silver on it.

The Self that is known / realised by the spiritual aspirant is pure like the clear sky. As the world is mere appearance, the good and bad qualities of the world never defile or affect the basic Self. The world is full of diversity, but the Self is only one. Being free from worldly defilements, the Self is pure, stainless.

And the spiritual aspirant is to go on meditating - "I am such Ātman".

● ● ●

The result of the constant contemplation / meditation mentioned in verses Nos. 38-39 above is stated in the next verse No. 40

(40)

रूप-वर्णादिकं सर्वं विहाय परमार्थवित् ।
परिपूर्ण-चिदानंद-स्वरूपेणावतिष्ठते ॥४०॥

After abandoning the form / colour, var ṇa (a colour; the var ṇa in the society), the knower of the Highest Self (paramārtha) remains in the form of his own or of the Self which is perfect; (existent), sentient and bliss (40).

Explanation :- Due to constant contemplation, the spiritual aspirant has realised the Param ārtha. The word param ārtha can be taken in two senses :- (a) true principle (b) the supreme thing, Brahman / Ātman. Here both these meanings refer to only one thing namely Ātman. The spiritual aspirant knowing the true principle namely Brahman / Ātman the highest thing has now become the knower of the param ārtha.

Prior to the knowledge / realisation of the Self, the spiritual aspirant was taking the world to be real. His attitude then was :- "My form is attractive. My appearance is impressive. I am fair in colour. I belong to the varṇa Brahmin in the society; and so on". Now he knows that the world is mere superimposition on the Self and that therefore the world and dealings in it are worthless. He has now realised that he himself is the Self who is perfect, sentient and bliss.

The Upaniṣads say, "One who knows[47] Brahman becomes Brahman". As per this dictum, the spiritual aspirant knowing the Brahman is now nothing but Brahman and continues to remain so.

• • •

When the individual soul becomes Brahman, he loses even his knolwedge that he is Brahman. This is declared in the following 41st verse.

(41)

ज्ञातृ-ज्ञान-ज्ञेय-भेदः परात्मनि न विद्यते ।
चिदानन्दैक-रूपत्वाद् दीप्यते स्वयमेव हि ॥४१॥

The (threefold) distinction of the knower, the knowledge and the knowable is not (possible) in the Highest Self. Hence the spiritual aspirant (who has become identical with that Supreme Self) himself shines (as the Self) as he has obtained the sentience and bliss as (his) only nature (41).

Explanation :- Before Self-realisation, the spiritual aspirant was busy in empirical dealings which included the threefold distinction (tripuṭī) :- The knower is one who knows something. The knowable is that which is to be known by the knower. And the result of the activity of knowing is knowledge. All these three are different.

These three factors do not exist in the Highest Self who is beyond this threefold distinction. The reason is as follows :- Highest Self is one, partless, and sentience only and akhaṇḍaikarasa. There is no distinction of any kind in the Supreme Self. Brahman / Self is free from the threefold distinctions (See under Verse No.36). Self is self-luminous (sva-saṁvedya); He illumines everything but is not illumined by any other thing (See under Verse No.29). Self himself shines through his own light.

Now, when the spiritual aspirant becomes Brahman free from the threefold distinction, in his case then there cannot be that threefold distinction. Now he being of the nature of bliss-sentience, he himself, like the Self, shines with his own light i.e. the knowledge (See Verse No.5).

References :

46-A. For this analogy, see Verse No.49.

47. ब्रह्म वेद ब्रह्मैव भवति ।

47-A. There is a variant reading "सर्व-ज्ञानेंधनं" in place of "सर्वाज्ञानेंधनं", in the Pune-version of the Atma-bodha. This is thus justifiable :- In the preceding Verse No.41, it was stated that when the individual soul becomes Brahman, then his knowledge that he is Brahman also perishes. That was also mentioned in Verse No.5. In accordance with that, the meaning here will be :- "the self-realisation consumes fuel in the form of knowledge". But this reading does not seem proper here. For what happens after the fire of knowledge is manifest is stated here. This fire of self-realisation completely consumes the Nescience. Hence the reading "सर्वाज्ञानेंधनं" (= all fuel in the form of Nescience) appears proper here. Hence that reading is adopted here.

(To be Continued... .)

- Prof. Dr. K. V. Apte

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XXIst World Congress of Philosophy

August 10-17, 2003, Istanbul

MAIN THEME : PHILOSOPHY FACING WORLD PROBLEMS

The World Congresses of Philosophy are organized every five years by the International Federation of Philosophical Societies in collaboration with one of its members, whose country is hosting the congress.

The XXIst World Congress of Philosophy will be held in Istanbul, on August 10-17, 2003, hosted by the Philosophical Society of Turkey.

This first congress of the XXIst Century and of the Third Millenium will focus on problems we are faced with at the turn of the century, in the light of philosophical knowledge. It aims at giving a picture of the present state of philosophy and to point at trends of development of philosophy in the services of humanity. We expect that many philosophers from all regions of the world will participate in it and make their contribution to the attainment of this aim. The inaugural session of the Congress will take place in the morning of August 11, 2003.

The main theme of the Congress will be developed, according to the tradition of the World Congresses, in the following four plenary sessions and five symposia :

PLENARY SESSIONS

1. The Role of Philosophy : Enlightenment, Post-modern Thought and Other Perspectives.
2. New Developments in Science and Technology : Ethical and Philosophical Challenges.
3. Globalisation and Cultural Identity.
4. Human Rights, the State and International Order.

SYMPOSIA

1. Inequality, Poverty and Development : Philosophical Perspectives.
2. Violence, War and Peace.
3. Democracy and its Future : Citizenship and Civil Society.
4. Human Rights : Concepts, Problems and Prospects.
5. Philosophy in Turkey.

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Aesthetics and Philosophy of Arts
Applied Ethics
Approaches to Philosophy
Bioethics and Medical Ethics
Business Ethics
Comparative Philosophy
Ethics
Human Rights
Images and Symbols
Logic and Philosophy of Logic
Metaphysics
Ontology
Persons and Identity
Phenomenology
Philosophical Anthropology
Philosophical Hermeneutics
Philosophy of Cognitive Science
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‘सद्गुरु-वररिंदे’

(The Kannada Poem composed by The Saint of Nimbargi in the Devanagari Script.)

ईसु दिन ई नाल्कुवेद । ब्यारे ब्यारे भाविसुतिद्दे ॥प॥
सद्गुरु-वररिंदे तिळिदु । सकलशास्त्रगळु ओंदेंबुतिद्दे ॥अ प॥

गिरिजे गंगा रुद्र हरिगळ । व्रतगळ ब्यारे माडुतलिद्दे ।
सार्वभौमरिंद तिळिदु । सकलव्रतगळु नानाागेद्दे ॥१॥

सप्त स्वर्ग उर्वि पाताळ । सुरचरगण ब्यारे तोरुतलिद्दे ।
सर्वशांतरिंद तिळिदु । गुरुलिंगजंगम नानागिद्दे ॥२॥

By The Grace of 'Sadguru-Vara'

How I assum'd the 'Chaturvedas' different
  All these days !
Then, by the grace of 'Sadguru-Vara', I knew
  All these holy scriptures, one.

How I assum'd Ganga Girije, Rudra, Hari different
  Practis'd observances separately to propitiate !
Then, by the grace of Guru Sarvabhavma, I knew
  All those observances were I.

How I assum'd the seven Heavens, our world and
  the Netherworld different !
  Gods, men and demons different !
Then, by the grace of All Peaceful Sadguru, I Knew
  The Gurulinga Jangama was I.

Transcreated by :

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The Anthropomorphic Mystical Experiences of Gurudeo Ranade

God manifests Himself in limitless forms. One important form in which God appears to spiritual aspirants is 'Anthropomorphic'. The term 'Anthropomorph' is made up of two words - anthropo (man), morph (form). Therefore, the term 'Anthropomorphic' means in the 'human' form. The world of mysticism has recorded a number of 'anthropomorphic' spiritual experiences of great mystics. The present article proposes to elucidate the anthropomorphic mystical experiences of Gurudeo Ranade such as Ganesh, Krishna, Bhrigu, Zoroaster, Nimbargi Maharaj - the founder of Nimbargi Sampradaya, Sri Bhausaheb Maharaj - the founder of Inchageri Sampradaya, and in his own form as recorded by Param Poojya Padmasri Kakasaheb Karkhanis, Sri. K. D. Sangoram, Sri. M. S. Deshpande - the prominent followers of Nimbargi Sampradaya. However, the anthropomorphic spiritual experiences of Gurudeo related to the dream visions, and the experiences related through the mouths of Saint - as he stated that about his spiritual experiences he prefers to speak through the mouths of saints - are not considered in the paper.

1. GANESH :

On one occasion Gurudeo Ranade informed Sri Karkhanis that he (Gurudeo) had the spiritual experience of the following stanza *(ovi)* of Jnaneshwari (Karkhanis 1977:150).

'अकार चरण युगुल । उकार उदर विशाल ।
मकारू महामंडळ । मस्तकाकारें ॥ ज्ञा. १/१९

The first letter (अ) in the above *ovi* represents His feet, the letter (उ) His big tummy and the letter (म) His circular head, the foremost among limbs. (All these three letters are united in the sacred syllable ॐ, which encompasses all spiritual knowledge, I salute Sri Ganesh,(1) the primal seed of the world through the grace of Guru Nivritti (16-20) (*Vide* Yadri 1995:2).

2. SRI KRISHNA :

A. As Described in the Abhang of Jnaneshwar :

Once Gurudeo Ranade was going to Alandi along with Sri Karkhanis in a Tonga. As soon as the Tonga left Pune, he began to have the vision of Sri Krishna(2), as described in the *abhang* of Sri Jnaneshwara, the substance of which is given below in English. The vision was present throughout his journey till they reached Alandi.

"Your forehead shines with the light of million moons.

You have lotus eyes and a smiling face.

O Krishna ! move on ! nod not, my dear !

Speak on lovingly for hours and hours

Lo ! how he stands and swings his arms !
As if beckoning me to come to Him.
Is he not *Vithal*, my Holy Father?"

(Sangoram, Deshpande (eds.) 1978 : 170-71).

This beautiful experience expounded in *abhang* became immensely endeared to Gurudeo.

Referring to the above *abhang*, Gurudeo once remarked that the expression of an experience can be properly understood only by those who have got such an experience; or enjoyed it. Others won't.

(*Vide* for details Sangoram, Deshpande 1978 : 260-61).

B. As Described by Ekanath Maharaj :

Eknath Maharaj describes one of his spiritual experiences in the following manner :

'असा कसा देवाचा देव बाई ठकडा, देव एका पायानें लंगडा'

(How come, O lady
The God of gods a tricker,
One-legged and lame !)

Around 1930s Gurudeo is said to have the aforesaid mystical experience which had come to Sri Ekanath Maharaj (Karkhanis 1977 : 50-51, Sangoram 1964 : 168).

C. Vitthal - as depicted by Tukaram Maharaj :

Once Prof. Sonopant Dandekar and Gurudeo had a discussion about the authorship of the following *abhang* and the substance of the same is given below by Sri. M. S. Deshpande.

With my eyes I saw Sri Vitthal(3) dear !
In colours transcending the following fours.
In a dark coloured house of a city milk-white
with a pink wall encircled,
I saw the size of tiny pulse*
A small Shrine blue of lustrous hue
Seated there shone Vithal(4) bright,
With ineffable effulgence !
Have this vision ! Says Tukaram
Why toil in vain delusion ?
(*Masuri Dal - *Ervum hirsutum*).

Regarding the above *abhang* Prof. Dandekar took the stand that though its authorship was attributed to Sri Tukaram, it was generally believed in the Varkari Sampradaya, that the *abhang* did not belong to Sri Tukaram and that it was considered to be an interpolation. "Is it so ?" remarked Gurudeo and stopped the discussion. After the sitting was over, he intimated to his disciple, "Whoever the author may be, I can definitely say that the experience described in the *abhang* is perfectly genuine !".

Sri. M. S. Deshpande (1963 : 163-64) correctly observes in this regard, "Who will be able to test the genuiness of this experience unless he has actually attained it ?"

3. BHRIGU :

Gurudeo went to stay with his nephew (Prof. N. G. Damle) for some days in 1917-18 at Vaidya's Wada near Vartakanchya Houd - Puṇe. During his stay there when he sat for meditation as usual one day the (Marathi) words, "Bhrigu⁽⁵⁾ Ale, Bhrigu Ale (Bhrigu comes, Bhrigu comes) fell on his ears and effigy drenched in a clean and bright light frisked through space from left to right.

(Sangoram 1964 : 165, and Karkhanis 1977 : 4).

4. ZOROASTER :

Sri Gurudeo had experienced supersensous words of various faiths. He once heard the words. 'Jharatustra⁽⁶⁾ Jharatustra!' and "saw" the prophet of the Parsis. At that time Sri Gurudev asked Sri Karkhanis whether the prophet of Parsis rode an old camel.

5. SRI NIMBARGI MAHARAJ :

Sri Nimbargi Maharaj is a *Param Guru* (the spiritual teacher of a spiritual teacher) of Gurudeo Ranade. In his meditation Gurudeo Ranade had "seen" Nimbargi Maharaj⁽⁷⁾ on some occasions. I narrate only two of such occasions here.

A. The vision at Sangli :

During his stay at Sangli Gurudev Ranade had the first wonderful vision of Sri Nimbargi Maharaj. One day when he was absorbed in meditation at the bungalow of Shivanagi there, he "saw" suddenly a vast expanse of light. In it a stately, tall figure of fair complexion, with a round, flaming, smiling face and red eyes⁽⁸⁾ approached him. It had a black blanket on its shoulders and a yellow turban on its head. Gurudeo instinctively thought it to be Sri Nimbargi Maharaj and reverentially bowed down to it. As soon as he raised his head, the figure took off its turban and said in Kannada : "Ida tago" - (take this) and placed the turban on the head of Gurudeo. It then lovingly looked at him for a couple of seconds and said again : "In ta" - ('return it'). At once Gurudeo said, "Tagolri Maharaj" - ('take it Sir') and returned it. The figure took it up and the vision vanised. Gurudeo was overjoyed to have the vision of Sri Nimbargi Maharaj and thought it to be an indication of his spiritual mission. (Sangoram, Deshpande (eds.) 1978 : 175).

B. The Vision at Inchageri :

Now, a description of how Gurudeo Ranade had "seen" Nimbargi Maharaj on another occasion is given. Gurudeo Ranade wanted to stay in a dry place, near Inchageri, having railway and postal facilities. He asked his friends to find such a place and when they were in search of it, he had a vision at Inchageri, in his morning meditation one day. He "saw" a tall person standing before him. He said, "Sri Nimbargi Maharaj has gone to Nimbal station". There upon, Gurudeo asked him "Is he still spreading the Gospel of Devotion". To this the person gave a thundering reply (in Kannada) : "Close your eyes, ears and lips and silently carry on your meditation", and disappeared. When Gurudeo finished his meditation and came out of the room he received a letter from his friend, informing him that he had selected a plot near Nimbal station and asking him whether he would go over there for final selection. There upon, Gurudeo accompanied his friend to the station and selected the site. He could soon purchase 48 acres of land for Rs. 400/- only (Sangoram, Deshpande 1978 : 176).

6. BHAUSAHEB MAHARAJ :

At least on two occasions Gurudeo had the visions of Sri Bhau Saheb Maharaj.

A. The vision of Maharaj with 'Chipalis' :

One day when Gurudeo was absorbed in meditation near Draupadi Ghat at Allahabad, he "saw" the vision of Sri Bhausaheb Maharaj (Gurudeo's spiritual teacher) with *Chipalis* (the two sticks used to clap together) in his hands. Gurudeo thought that it was, a sacred place, where the devotion of Maharaj would deepen and diffuse, so he purchased the plot and got a beautiful bungalow built in 1940, for his own residence and began to live in it from Jan. 1944. It was here that one of the main branches of the Adhyatma Vidya Mandir was opened and housed. In 1942 Gurudeo observed, "I constructed this bungalow, without any thought to the future. God knows who will use it for spiritual purposes (Sangoram, Deshpande (eds.) 1978 : 192-93, Deshpande 1963 : 152).

B. The Vision of Maharaj with 'Veena' :

On another occasion Gurudeo had the vision of his spiritual teacher. This time Sri Bhausaheb Maharaj had held a 'Veena' (Indian lute) in his hands. So Sri Gurudeo thought it to be an indication that he should deliver the message of saints through the elucidation of their choice songs. From that time he began to make use of such songs in his lectures and explain their spiritual significance. These lectures were later on developed and published in the book-form (Vide Sangoram, Deshpande 1978 : 203)

7. THE VISION OF HIS OWN FORM :

At the time of the Amrta - mahotsava (in 1956) at Jamkhandi, Sri Gurudeo had a wonderful vision. When arati (ceremony of waving light) was going on in the Rameshwara temple, he "saw" that he was playing on the lap of God, like a son playing on the lap of his father. This vision threw Gurudeo into transports of bliss (Vide Deshpande 1963 : 166).

From the preceding description it becomes obvious that Gurudeo Ranade was blessed not only with rich varieties of anthropomorphic mystical experiences ranging from some Hindu deities, the ancient Ṛṣi, the founders of Parseeism, Nimbargi Sampradaya, Inchageri Sampradaya to his own form but also understood their spiritual significance. The above list of anthropomorphic mystical experiences of Gurudeo cannot be said to be exhaustive(9), but only a tip of an ice-berg and that there is a wide scope for the serious and genuine students of mysticism to unearth them.

NOTES :

1) **Ganesh/Ganapati** : The most commonly accepted form of Ganapati depicts him as red in colour and in a human body with an elephant's head. Out of the two tusks, one is broken. He has four arms... The belly is of generous proportions. He may be seated in *Padmasana* (lotus-posture). When the belly does not permit this, the right leg may be shown bent and resting on the seat (Vide for details Harshananda Swami 1987 : 131).

2) Sri Kṛṣṇa, is the ninth incarnation of the Lord Viṣṇu (the blue skyed God)..... To the average Hindu,

he is the supreme statesman, warrior, hero, philosopher, teacher, nay God Himself. He is the great expounder of the 'song celestial', the Bhagavad Gītā (Harshananda Swami 1987 : 39).

3) One day in the presence of Gurudeo Ranade, a young daughter of one of his disciples sang two to three times the abhang of Chokhamela *"Vithal Vithal gajari, avaghi duma dumali Pandhari"* (The whole Pandharpur was resounding with the sound Vithal, Vithal). Gurudeo thereafter expressed his joy before his disciple with these words :

"O what a bliss ! The Pandhari of my body was surcharged with the sound *'Vithal', 'Vithal'* ! Really your lovely child is blessed !" (Deshpande 1963 : 159).

4) The literal meaning of *'Vithal'* is deity which stands on *'Vite'* (brick).

Panduranga *Viṭṭala* commonly known as *Viṭṭala* or *Vithobā* is the deity of the famous Viṣṇu temple at Pandharpur in Maharashtra (Harshananda Swami 1987 : 52).

5) Bhrigu - Vedic Sage/seer, is one of the Prajapatis and great Rishis, and is regarded as the founder of the race of the Bhrigus or Bhārgavas, in which was born Jamadagni and Parashuram (Dawson 1982 : 54-55).

6) Zoroaster (628-551 B.C.) is a great Iranian religious reformer and the founder of Zoroastrianism or Parseeism. He is said to have received a vision from *Ahura Mazda,* the Wise Lord, who appointed him to 'preach the truth' (The Wordsworth Encyclopedia of World Religions 1999 : 1081).

7) Once Gurudeo Ranade asked a villager to sing a song. The villager sang a folk song which contained a few graphic glimpses of a village saint. Gurudeo liked the song very much and asked the villager to sing the same three times. When some of the disciples of Gurudeo asked him (Gurudeo) the reason, Gurudeo replied : "You see, I felt that it was the description of Sri Nimbargi Maharaj himself. It just raised the figure before me." When Sri Gurudev was further asked whether he had "seen" Sri Nimbargi Maharaj, Sri Gurudev answered with a silent smile. This song was, later on, included in the introduction to the 'BODHA SUDHE' of Nimbargi Maharaj (Deshpande 1963 : 152).

8) Sri Nagappa - a grandson of Sri Nimbargi Maharaj was once asked by Sri Gurudeo "Is it true that your grandfather's eyes were always happened to be red"? Sri Nagappa replied, "We have heard that as Sri Nimbargi Maharaj used to perform meditation day and night his eyes remained red".

Three-four days before the demise of Gurudeo Sri Karkhanis put the question to Gurudeo - "On what ground did you ask Sri Nagappa whether the eyes of Sri Nimbargi Maharaj were always red ?" Gurudeo replied, "What do you mean ? I have "seen" Sri Nimbargi Maharaj directly, that is why....." (Karkhanis 1977 : 60-61).

9) Gurudeo Ranade had, for instance, the mystical experience of beautiful eyes filling the whole world. (Karkhanis 1977 : 2-3).

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Intense love towards God : (Bhava)

What is wanted is the inner quality of the heart which may enable a ***Sadhaka*** *to conquer time. In order, however, that; that quality might be attained,* ***Abhyasa*** *(practice) may be necessary, but it is not all. If you have reached a particular stage of* ***Bhava,*** *then neither much time, nor much practice would be needed. Normally, however, people are not endowed with that kind of* ***Bhava.*** *Therefore, they have to depend upon practice and time. Suppose a man has spent about fifty years of life in the spiritual pursuit, of course, it may be granted that he may be on a comparatively higher level than what he occupied a few years ago; but he can never be said, only on that account, to have reached the Absolute End.*

(Gurudeo in Bhagavadgita as a Philosophy of God-realisation p.238)

Can The Scientific Study of Religion Contribute Positively to Moral Discourse ?

I

The scientific study of religion usually offers a reductive explanation of morality. One would therefore tend to presume that it can hardly be expected to make a positive contribution to human morality, especially conventional morality.

The purpose of this presentation is to challenge this assumption, by developing a case in which the scientific study of religion seems to make a positive contribution to a system of even conventional morality.

The system of conventional morality involved is that of the Theravada School of Buddhist thought. This school has two interlacing systems of morality - one for the householders and another for the monks. Although some of the precepts are shared I shall be examining them here only in relation to the monastic order, although its conclusions, I believe, are capable of being extended to the system for the householders.

The first of the ten vows which the monk takes on becoming one is to abstain from the taking of life. It is this vow on which I shall focus in this paper.

II

"Abstaining from taking life" is a key precept of Theravada Buddhism, both for the householder and the monk. The relevant question to ask from our point of view is : what does it entail? It obviously entails not killing another human being; it also obviously entails not killing other animals; but does it entail vegetarianism?

I shall first examine the issue in the context of monks. The Buddhist monks were people without visible means of support - or alternatively, their means of support was quite visible namely, the laity. The laity, however, would sometimes offer them meat when they went on the begging rounds. So the question arose: is the acceptance of the meat so offered consistent with the precept which enjoins abstention form taking life?

The difficulty was resolved as follows in a famous dialogue of the Buddha. Monks were allowed to accept meat offered to them if it was pure, that is, not vitiated from three points of view: (1) they should not have seen the animal being killed; (2) they should not have heard that the animal has been killed for them and (3) they should not suspect that the animal has been killed for them.

If we try to deduce any general rule underlying these three points of view it seems to be that the monks should not be the cause of deprivation of life, and should be fully confident that such is the case.

According to this rule thus the Buddhist monks can accept meat so long as its production was "anonymous", so far as they are concerned.

This provision of the Buddhist order has been criticised by moralists as a cop-out, or certainly coming close to it. If the Buddha wanted to avoid the taking of life he could have ordered a blanket ban against taking meat. Why did he not do so ? The Buddhist explanation is that he did not do so because such a ban was not required. If animals are not attributively killed to serve the monks, then they would have lost their life in any case, monks or no monks. One can thus argue, in favour of the Buddhist position, that what the Buddha was trying to avoid was loss of life on account of the monks, rather than loss of life in general. We may fault him for not aiming to achieve a broader goal, but can we fault him in terms of this own limited goal that no loss of life should come about through his monastic order ?

At first sight the argument that he may have achieved his limited goal seems persuasive. If no animal has been killed in order to serve the monks, then clearly no additional loss of life has been caused on account of his monastic order.

It is important to keep the case-effect relationship in mind here, as it is through this that the point will be developed further.

If the goal of the Buddha was to avoid any incremental loss of life on account of the Buddhist order, or what the economists would call marginal loss of life, then one might now wish to ask: was it achieved? In an immediate sense it was. But is it also true in an ultimate sense?

Economics may not be a science in the strict sense of the term but the role of economic factors in religious life, I think we will all agree, falls within the province of the scientific study of religion. And it requires only a knowledge of the basic laws of supply and demand to realize that if Buddhist monks were served meat, even if the killing of the animal was not "seen, heard or suspected", it would raise the demand for meat, hence the supply, of meat and hence lead to loss of life. Theoretical economics of this kind had not developed in the time of the Buddha and perhaps there was no need for it too either, but the clarifying (if hypothetical) question to ask at this point is : if Buddha had known of the laws of demand and supply, and still wanted to avoid any marginal loss of life on account of the existence of the Buddhist order, would he not have gone in for a total ban on the consumption of meat by monks ?

This seems to me to be a case where the scientific study of religion clearly leads to an enhanced understanding of the operation of conventional moral codes.

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The difference between literature and journalism is that journalism is unreadable, and literature is not read.

- Oscar Wilde

The ignorant man always adores what he cannot understand.

- Cesare Lombroso

(Continued from last issue)

Bhagwadgeeta & its exposition by Sant Dnyaneshwar

Chapter IV ज्ञान योग

Revelation Through Knowledge

(Sanskrit Script followed by English translation)

श्रीभगवान उवाच -

इमं विवस्वते योगं प्रोक्तवानहमव्ययम् ।
विवस्वान् मनवे प्राह मनुरिक्ष्वाकवेऽब्रवीत् ॥१॥

Lord Shrikrishna said -

I professed this eternal yoga to Vivaswan Vivaswan told the same to Manu and Manu spoke to Ikshvaku.

Saint Dnyaneshwar explains -

Lord Shrikrishna said to Arjuna that this yoga of knowledge was explained by him to Vivaswan the sun-god, long long ago in ancient times. The sungod told it to Vaivaswat Manu. Manu put it into practice and proclaimed the same to his son Ikshvaku. Thus is the tradition of this yoga.

एवं परंपराप्राप्तमिमं राजर्षयो विदुः ।
स कालेनेह महता योगो नष्टः परंतप ॥२॥

Thus by tradition, handed down from one to another, the royal sages knew it. Then after a long lapse of time, this yoga was obscured and lost.

Saint Dnyaneshwar explains -

The Lord said to Arjuna, in the course of time, this yoga was known to royal sages. But in the present time, almost nobody knows it. This is because most of human beings like the pleasures of the senses and become unaware of the knowledge of the soul. With consciousness going the wrong way, people came to believe the pleasures of the senses as the soul aim of life, and started loving the objects of senses more than anything else. In the city of the naked, who will value high quality dress material ? What is the use of sun's light for a man born blind ? What the sweet tunes of song will mean to a deaf person ? How the moonlight gladden a fox's heart ? What the moon will mean to crows who shut their eyes before the moon rises ? Those who have not even seen the border of renunciation or the discriminative intellect, how can they know about the presence of God ? I cannot say how the temptations of senses grew to such an extent with lapse of ages of time, that the this yoga of knowledge, got wiped out from this world.

भगवान उवाच,

स एवाय मया तेऽद्य योगः प्रोक्तः पुरातनः ।
भक्तोऽसिमे सखा चेति रहस्यं ह्येतदुत्तमम् ॥३॥

The Lord said,

The same ancient yoga has been proclaimed today to you by me, because you are my devotee and friend and this is the supreme secret yoga.

Saint Dnyaneshwar explains -

Shrikrishna says, Oh Arjuna, son of Kunti, I have told to you the same ancient yoga. Do not have any doubt about it. This yoga is the secret of my life. You are my keen devotee and a dear friend. How can I hide it from you ? You are worthy for my faith. Though we are on the battle field, I have decided give this secret to you and remove all your ignorance.

अर्जुन उवाच,

अपरं भवतो जन्म परं जन्म विवस्वतः ।
कथमेतद्विजानीयां त्वमादौ प्रोक्तवानिति ॥४॥

Your birth belongs to a later period while that of Vivasvan (the sun god) was much earlier in ancient times (at the time of creation). How am I to believe that you have proclaimed it to him in the beginning ?

Saint Dnyaneshwar explains -

Arjuna says : Oh Krishna, you are the refuge of all born in this world. As a matter of fact, we are all born because of your benevolence. We are like your children and you are like the mother of all. How can we question your important stature ? Kindly forgive my question. You said you have told this yoga to the sun-god first. Even our fore fathers do not know when the sun was born and you are in the present time, standing before me. How I am to believe that you explained this yoga to the sun-god ? Please explain to me how is this all to be believed ?

भगवान उवाच,

बहूनि मे व्यतीतानि जन्मानि तव चार्जुन ।
तान्यहं वेद सर्वाणि न त्वं वेत्थ परंतप ॥५॥

The lord said -

I have passed many lives before and so also you have. I know all of them but you do not, oh Arjuna, the *dread of the enemy.*

Saint Dnyaneshwar explains -

Lord Shrikrishna replied, oh Arjuna, your doubt is not out of place, but only out of ignorance that you do not know your past births while I know mine all. I remember all my incarnations whenever I manifested in them in all my births.

अजोऽपि सन्नव्ययात्मा भूतानामीश्वरोऽपिसन् ।
प्रकृतिं स्वामधिष्ठाय संभवाम्यात्ममायया ॥६॥

Though I am unborn and My Self is imperishable, though I am the lord of all creatures, I establish myself in my own innate nature and come into being (whenever I desire) through my own power known as Maya (which cannot be perceived by ordinary beings).

Saint Dnyaneshwar explains -

I am unborn but incarnate myself through my innate power of Maya. I am imperishable and eternal. My eternality is unaffected whenever I incarnate myself as a being and end the same in due-course. It all appears so to all onlookers who cannot perceive my eternal self. I am not even touched by any action, but it so appears to others that I am acting within the same framework of actions as others. I am formless but appear to others as a form when I incarnate myself. I perform these actions like an actor in a drama, which does not affect my unborn imperishable Self.

यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत ।
अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ॥७॥
परित्राणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम् ।
धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय संभवामि युगे युगे ॥८॥

Whenever there is a decline of righteousness and rise of unrighteousness, Oh Bharat (Oh Arjuna), I create Myself (as an incarnation) (7)

For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked and for establishment of righteousness, I come into being (as an incarnation) from age to age. (8)

Saint Dnyaneshwar explains -

It has been a tradition for me to protect righteousness whenever it is in peril in every age. At that time I keep aside My unborn and formless nature and appear as an incarnation to do My duty to put the world on right lines. When I come into being as an incarnation to protect my devotees, I swallow the darkness of ignorance, break the bounds of evil, destroy the proclamations of the wicked and make the righteous ones raise the flags and festoons of celebration. I destroy the families of evil, create respect for the good, and re-establish merit and morality in the society. I remove the carbon of evil from the flames of good thoughts and make them glow to give light. Then, the delight of yogis know no bounds. The rule of ethics and morality then abound all over the world. The darkness of evil gives way to light of righteous happiness. I remove the mountains of evil deeds and make the rivers of goodness flow to spread delight. I appear in every age to carry out this duty of mine. Those who understand me in this way are the real wise men of the world.

जन्मकर्म च मे दिव्यमेवं ये वेत्ति तत्वतः ।
त्यक्त्वा देहं पुनर्जन्म नैति मामेति सोऽर्जुन ॥९॥

He who understands thus the true nature of My divine incarnations and activities (of creation, *maintenance and dissolution) is not born again when he leaves his body but comes to me.*

Saint Dnyaneshwar explains -

That man gets free from the bondage of the world, who understands My eternal formless nature, though engaged in coming into being as incarnations and participating in activities of the world for maintaining the good and destroying the evil, in doubtless perception and lives in the body without any affection for the body and its activities. When he leaves the body, he attains my Supreme Abode.

वीतरागभयक्रोधाः मन्मया मामुपाश्रिताः ।
बहवो ज्ञानतपसा पूता मद्भावमागताः ॥१०॥

Deprived of passion, fear and anger, fully absorbed in Me, taking refuge in Me, many purified by austerity and attaining wisdom have attained to My state of being (the state of the Supreme Being).

Saint Dnyaneshwar explains -

Those who do not rue over the past or worry for the future, do not succumb to passions, do not tread path of anger succeed in reaching Me. Those who are devoted to me, always meditate on Me and get fully absorbed in Me have no difficulty in reaching Me. Those who never brood over the past nor care for the future, but always take refuge in Me also succeed in reaching Me. Those who are purified through austerities of moral and mental disciplines and attain knowledge of My Being reach the State of My Supreme Being.

ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तास्तथैव भजाम्यहम् ।
ममवर्त्मानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ॥११॥

As men approach me so do I accept them. Oh Arjuna, men follow my path from all directions.

Saint Dnyaneshwar explains -

Persons approach me in different attitudes and different ways. I reward them accordingly. To worship Me is the natural tendency of all human beings. Because of lack of knowledge that every one is a form of the Supreme Being, the intellect thinks in different directions to understand Me. I am one, but persons think in their ways that I am many. Despite the fact that I am one with all beings, they assume differences, they give me different names, some call me gods and goddesses. I allow them to approach Me in their own way. I accept them accordingly. They follow my path from different directions and ultimately I allow them to reach Me.

काङ्क्षन्तः कर्मणां सिद्धिं यजन्तः इहदेवताः ।
क्षिप्रं हि मानुषे लोके सिद्धिर् भवतिकर्मजा ॥१२॥

Those who are engaged in their works desire fruition in their works in this world and worship various gods (forms of the Supreme) for the same. In this world, success in works this way, comes very quickly.

Saint Dnyaneshwar explains -

People with various desires in their minds, see Me in the various forms of gods and goddesses and worship them for fulfillment of their desires. Whatever their desires are, they are fulfilled this way. Oh Arjuna, understand clearly that whatever fulfillment they obtain this way is due to their own karma i.e. previous deeds. As a matter of fact, whoever gives or whoever takes is the karma, the effect of their previous deeds alone. Whatever seeds we sow, the same will grow; whatever is held before the mirror, the same will be seen in it. Our own sound is reflected back to us from the mountain sides in a valley. I am the seer of all these happenings and goings on. By worship and sacrifices to gods, the person's own deeds come to fruition at right times.

चातुर्वर्ण्यं मया कृतं सृष्टं गुणकर्मविभागशः ।
तस्य कर्तारम् अपि मां विद्ध्यकर्तार मव्ययम् ॥१३॥

The four fold order of professions was created by me based on aptitudes and vocations. Though I am creator (of this system), understand that I do nothing and am eternal (i.e. I do not undergo any change).

Saint Dnyaneshwar explains -

I have created the four fold structure of the society according to the comparative compatibility of the person's aptitude and his vocation. The system evolves and is carried on according to this comparative compatibility of aptitutdes & vocations; I am aloof and do nothing. People are one but they divide themselves in four professions for carrying out the work of the society by way of responsible duty.

न मां कर्माणि लिम्पति न मे कर्मफले स्पृहा ।
इति मां योऽभिंजानाति कर्मभिर्नस बध्यते ॥१४॥

The works do not defile me nor have I a desire for their fruit. He who understands me thus, does not *suffer the bondage from works.*

Saint Dnyaneshwar explains -

Though the four fold structure of society is created by me to facilitate the social work system, he who knows that the work does not proceed from me nor I have a desire from any fruit from it, transcends the worldly work and desire, becoming free from its bondage.

एवं ज्ञात्वा कृतं कर्म पूर्वैरपि मुमुक्षुभिः ।
कुरू कर्मैव तस्मात्त्वं पूर्वैः पूर्व तरं कृतम् ॥१५॥

The ancients who sought liberation performed their work knowing this principle. Therefore, you also do your work accordingly.

Saint Dnyaneshwar explains -

The ancient seekers of liberation knew me as I told you above and followed the practice of their work accordingly. Just as a roasted seed does not grow any plant, their works did not stop them from attaining liberation from bondage of the works. Oh Arjuna, to decide whether work done this way is work or non-work is difficult even for learned men.

किं कर्म किमकर्मेति कवयोऽप्यत्र मोहिताः ।
तत्ते कर्म प्रवक्ष्यामि यज्ज्ञात्वा मोक्ष्यसेऽशुभात् ॥१६॥

What is action ? What is inaction ? These questions put even the wise into bewilderment. I will explain to you what action is, knowing which you will be freed from the evil of the bondage of worldly work.

Saint Dnyaneshwar explains -

Even the wise are not able to decide what is action and what is inaction. A fake coin and a real coin at times look so much alike, that we doubt our own sight. Those who have the power even to create another world like this one, think because of delusion that it is inaction, but they are trapped into the bondge of action. Even the learned and the wise get into confusion while deciding between action and inaction, so how can an ordinary common man can do so ? I will explain to you this riddle.

कर्मणोह्यपि बोद्धव्यं बोद्धव्यं च विकर्मणः ।
अकर्मणश्च बोद्धव्यं गहना कर्मणो गतिः ॥१७॥

One ought to understand what action is, what is wrong action and what is inaction. The way of work is difficult to understand.

Saint Dnyaneshwar explains -

The divine will to create the world to suit the natural vocations (कर्म) of the individuals is true action. This action needs to be understood clearly. That action which fits the fourfold professional system of individual duties created by the Lord is true action. One should also understand the various religious austerities, their types and fruits therefrom as inunciated in Vedas. Moreover, one who perceives himself as a form of the Supreme Self, who is not bound by any action, remains free from the bondage of action. If one has no perception of this thought, then one has to understand that the power of action is so great as to bind the whole world. We refrain from actions born of desire and do our duties with the soul linked with the Divine. Forbidden action is that which is harmful to oneself or others.

कर्मण्यकर्म यः पश्येदकर्मणि च कर्म यः ।
स बुद्धिमान् मनुष्येषु स युक्तः कृत्स्नकर्मकृत् ॥१८॥

He who sees action in inaction and inaction in action is the wise among men, a yogin and one who has accomplished all his work.

Saint Dnyaneshwar explains -

One who does the action without desire of any fruit therefrom, does not think that he is engaged in the action. He is firm in the belief that there is nothing in this world without divine presence and this goes beyond the bondage of action and has no duties to perform. He performs all his duties truthfully and with responsibility in the interest of the society and the world, but himself remains unattached. He is the man who is the real wise amongst men, a yogin and one who has accomplished all his duties in its entirity. Just as a man who sees his reflection in water, yet knows well that he is separate from water; a man travelling in a boat in the river sees the trees on the shore as running, but knows the reality that trees cannot move. Though one sees that the sun rises and sets, but we know that the movement apparent only. Likewise a man who performs his duties but sees the divine will in action and himself in inaction, is in reality a yogin who has attained Parabrahma. Such a man has not seen anything but has seen the whole world. Such a man has not done anything but has accomplished all. He sits at one place, but it is as if he has travelled far and wide. He has become omnipresent and omniscient that is one with the whole universe.

यस्य कर्मे समारंभाः कामसंल्कपवर्जिताः ।
ज्ञानाग्निदग्धकर्माणं तमाहुः पण्डितं बुधाः ॥१९॥

He who undertakes all his actions free from any desire, and whose all actions are burnt in the fire of Self-knowledge is called a sage by all wise men.

Saint Dnyaneshwar explains -

The man who is neither touched by sorrow nor by any desire, when he participates in some action or who neither wills to start some action nor feels an urge to complete same action which he has already started is said to have burnt all his actions in fire of the ultimate knowledge of Self and is known by the learned and wise as one who has realised parabrahma itself.

(To be continued....)

- P. D. Dharwarkar

188, Guruwar Peth, Tilakwadi, Belgaum-6.

Sensible people regard nothing as useless.

- La Fontaine

Men who are unhappy, like men who sleep badly, are always proud of the fact.

- Bertrand Russel

Perfectionism, no less than isolationism, or imperialism as power politics, may obstruct the paths to international peace.

- Franklin Roosevelt

(Continued from last issue)

Eternity Compressed in Time :

My Reminiscences of Shri Gurudeva

While dealing with the incentives of illusion, blindness and sleep which led man God-ward according to Hindi saints, Shri Gurudeva comes to the philosophical and ethical considerations which similarly awaken the inherent spirituality of man. For philosophical incentive Shri Gurudeva discusses a very celebrated poem in the 'Vinaya Patrika', (केशव कहि न जाय का कहिये) in which Tulsidas tells us that it is impossible to understand fully the architectonic skill of the Creator. "The way in which you have constructed the world, O Creator !" says the poet, "passes beyond our comprehension. If we just look at the handiwork of God either in the mracocosm or in the microcosm, our imagination reels, and our mind remains enwrapped within itself (समुझि मनहि मन रहिये) so that any discussion of Thy powers becomes impossible." According to Shri Gurudeva this idea of the ineffability of God's creation comes very near to the cosmotheological argument in Kant, viz., the contemplation either of the cosmic process or of the end to which the whole creation moves.

Secondly, Tulsidas tells us that this ephemeral world is like a picture drawn by an artist without hands, and without colours, on a wall which does not exist. Shri Gurudeva reflects that the juxtaposition of impossibilities here reminds us of the familiar definition of philosophy as "the search by a blind man of a black cat in dark place where it is not." He also recalls Plato's famous utterance in the Seventh Book of the Republic : "an archer and no archer, aiming and not aiming, at a bird and no bird, sitting and not sitting, on a tree and no tree, killed it and did not kill it, with an arrow and no arrow."

Thirdly, says Tulsidas, "a crocodile living in the waters of a mirage, swallows without mouth all the animate the inanimate objects that go to partake of the water :

रविकरं वीर बसई अति दारून, मकर रूप तेहि मांहीं ।
वदनहीन जो ग्रसई चराचर, पान करन जे जाहीं ॥

Fourthly, Tulsidas says that we must transcend the considerations of reality, unreality and real unreality. Ramanuja regards the world as real; Shankaracharya regards the world as unreal; and Nimbarka as real unreal. One can rise above these mutually contradictory philosophical positions only if one realises the Self. Self-realisation alone can put an end to these three kinds of ideological delusions : तुलसिदास परिहरै तीनि भ्रम जो आपहिं पहिचाने. On this point Shri Gurudeva raises a very important philosophical question regarding the relation of transcendence of delusions and the realisation of the Self. Which is the cause and which is the effect? One may say that the two are independent like the obverse and the reverse sides of the same coin, that neither could be achieved without the other, and that the two are achieved simultaneously, if at all. Shri Gurudeva remarks that in case we are asked to choose the priority either of transcendence of delusions or of the realisation of the Self, we would rather say that he who has realised the Self will be able to transcend the delusions and nobody else. Thus Tulsidas preaches the doctrine of self-realisation in the song discussed above.

Coming to the ethical approach to the spiritual life, Shri Gurudeva discusses a song by Surdas in which the Gopis lay accusations at the door of Lord Krishna by apparently blaming Uddhava. In the song "अघो धनि तुम्हरो वेवहार", the Gopis say, 'O Uddhava, you are cutting down mango trees and planting prickly thorns. Wherever there is sandal-wood to be found, you are consigning it to flames. Good things you despise, and bad things you encourage.

You are rehabilitating the thieves, and making good people run away, and you place reliance on those who carry tales to you, "चोर वसावत साह भगावत, चुगलनि को एतबार", We cannot understand your three-fold manner, O Uddhava, namely 'कथनी', 'करनी', and 'रहनी'. So we have come to the conclusion, thy court, thy Assembly Hall, is merely chaotic, 'अंधाधुंध दरबार'. The good people are punished, and bad people prosper."

Reflecting over the philosophic consequences of the above utterance of Gopis, Shri Gurudeva says that the great German philosopher Immanuel Kant having observed the disparity between desert and fruit (good people suffer and bad people prosper), argued that God as moral Governor of the world must exist to bring about an adjustment between desert and fruit. This is famous as the Moral Proof for the existence of God. However, Shri Gurudeva goes altogether beyond Kant when he says that as members of the spiritual world it should be "our spiritual endavour" so to feel and pray that Providence makes this necessary desired adjustment of merit and reward "here and now", in this very life rather than in some future life of the immortal soul.

The next incentive to spiritual life is drawn from a consciousness of sin. Shri Gurudeva refers to three different attitudes to sin as exhibited by Surdas, Duryodhan and Indra. In his song "कीजै प्रभु अपने बिरद की लाज", Surdas says in a pitiful mood, "I have seen, I have heard, I have known, and yet I have not been able to extricate myself from evil, देखत सुनत सबै जानत हौं तऊ न आयो बाज. Surdas here accepts his responsibility for the sin committed by him. Shri Gurudeva adds that similar is the attitude of Virgil, who says, "I know the better, but follow the worse", "Video maliors proboque, deteriora sequor". Surdas further acknowledge that his self-effort alone would not enable him to rise above sin, 'दई न जात केवट उतराई, चाहत चढयौ जहाज.' Therefore, he asks for the grace of God which alone can fill the deficiencies of self-effort.

Shri Gurudeva tells us that Duryodhan and Richard III exhibit the second attitude to sin which is that of vicarious responsibility. The sinner throws responsibility for his bad actions on God. Duryodhan blames Lord Krishna for making him act in a sinful way :

जानामि धर्मं न च मे प्रवृत्तिः जानाम्यधर्मं न च मे निवृत्तिः ।
केनापि देवेन हृदि स्थितेन यथा नियुक्तोऽसि तथा करोमि ॥

Shri Gurudeva points out that this vicarious doctrine may take the shape of throwing responsibility either on nature, or on society, or on God. Richard III says that "it is nature which compels me to do bad actions." Analysing the attitude of Duryodhan, Shri Gurudeva remarks, "the real attitude of Duryodhan is not simply that of throwing responsibility on God, but that of a despising and defiant challenge to the power of God.

Richard III says defiantly, "Nature has sent me mis-shapen and before my time into the world, so that dogs bark at me when I halt by them. Therefore, it will be my endeavour to take vengeance upon nature for this act of cruelty." (Pathway to God in Hindi Literature, pp.53-54).

Coming to the third attitude towards sin, Shri Gurudeva tells us that it is exhibited by Indra and Augustine. This attitude utilises the sin for rising into a life of spirit. "Had I not sinned," says Indra, "I would not have had that superb attitude of devotion of Rama, which other gods are jealous of in my case." Augustine also rises from a life of sin to a life of great spiritual achievement. Shri Gurudeva remarks, "This attitude therefore concerns itself with the phenomenon of rebound from a life of sin to a life of spirit."

Tulsidas points out in his song 'शंकर रामरूप अनुरागे' that Shankara (पंचमुख त्रिनयन) Brahma (चतुर्मुख) and Kartikeya (षड़ानन) enjoyed the beauty (chabi) of Rama with their fifteen, eight and twelve eyes respectively. But Indra was the most fortunate among all gods because he enjoyed the chabi of rama with a thousand eyes, thanks to his very sins. In this context we have to recall how Indra was condemned to have a thousand holes or eyes in his body by sage Gautam for his "most culpable sensuality" 'in respect of former's wife Ahilya. Gods were jealous of Indra because he was enjoying the beauty of Rama with a thousand eyes. Shri Gurudeva thus points out that a consciousness of our sins might also enable us to realise God, provided we repent and make a sincere effort to move on the pathway to God. This happened in the case of Augustine. Shri Gurudeva tells us that Augustine led a very sinful life in the beginning. His mother Monica went to her teacher St. Ambrose and tearfully sought his blessings for a turn in the wayward life of her son. Consoling her, St. Ambrose said, "Weep not my sister; the child of these holy tears shall never perish " It need not be over-emphasised that by the grace of St. Ambrose, Augustine ultimately became the "second founder of Christianity."

Shri Gurudeva next takes up the incentive of old age and death as described by Tulsidas and Surdas in their songs. In his song "ममता तू न गई मेरे मन ते", Tulsidas laments that despite the deterioration in his vital powers due to old age and the consequent hatred for him on the part of his dear relatives, his personal attachment to them continues unabated. He says, "In general my body has become utterly exhausted I have lost all my vitality. All colour has disappeared from my face; my hair which have been my companions from my very birth, have now become ripe; also I feel no shame in either sitting or walking naked." Describing the onset of weakness in his sensory organs, Tulsidas says, "Light has disappeared from my eyes, and my ears are refusing to hear sounds and words; my throat has been covered by phlegm and has been subject to paresis and bile." Coming to the condition of motor organs, the poet says, "My hands are suffering from continuous tremor; my teeth are either broken or have disappeared. My mouth cannot give out understandable words; unable to utter words, I call my son by beckoning to him with my hand." Finally, says Tulsidas, "my dear relatives and even my wife are turning me out of my own house.

Even this has not prevented me from my personal attachment to them. As dark spots must remain constant possessions of the moon, so I and Mine have remained my constant possessions." Feeling extremely wretched, Tulsidas says to God, "Therefore, I surrender myself to Thee, O Lord, in the hope that, that alone might enable me to extricate myself from thraldom of sense."

Shri Gurudeva while explaining the famous poem of Surdas, "जा दिन मनपंछी उड़ि जैहे", tells, us that a philosophic contemplation on death becomes a powerful incentive to spiritual life. In this context he recalls how ancient Greek philosophers, both Stoics and Epicureans, contemplated on death. The Epicureans, for instance, tell us not to be afraid of death, because "When we are, Death is not; and when Death is, we are not."

Shri Gurudeva further refers to the solemn utterance of St. Paul, the Christian apostle, that "I die daily", which means "that only when we keep the fact of death every moment before us we may be encouraged to devote continuous attention to the spiritual life."

Coming to the song of Surdas, Shri Gurudeva initially clarifies that ordinarily the relation between a bird sitting on a tree and the foliage of that tree is that first the foliage of the tree falls and then the bird flies away. But Surdas by a sort of विपर्ययालंकार reversing this relation tells us that first the bird flies away, and then the foliage of the tree falls down. This is as much as to say that all sensations, affections and passions crumble down as soon as the self has flown away in the event of death.

Shri Gurudeva explains that in contrast to the accidental relation that exists between the bird and the tree on which it perches, the relation between the self and the body is organic. This organic relation between soul and body accounts for the lingering of the heat in the body-cells of an old man even after the soul has departed at the time of his death. Surdas adds that in case of the death of a young child, the lustre and colour of the body of the child whom one had fondly loved in life, depart in addition, "thus adding a poignant note to our contemplation on the ravages of death in general." At this point I cannot help recalling my stay with Shri Gurudeva at Allahabad in January 1953. In day time Shri Shintre used to type the chapters of the Pathway to God in Hindi Literature after taking dictation from Shri Gurudeva. During the ensuing night Shri Gurudeva used to call me at any time after midnight for reading out to him the typed material. I remember vividly that Shri Gurudeva made a reference to the death of his second son when I read to him the last portion of the bygone paragraph in which description of the ravages of death in respect of "a young child" is mentioned. The expression, "adding a poignant note to our contemplation on the ravages of death", reveals very touching how Shri Gurudeva was witness to the departure of "the lustre and colour of the body of the child whom one had fondly loved in life'. Shri Gurudeva impresses upon us the warning given by Surdas so as to turn our body to its proper spiritual use long before the soul-bird has flown away.

(To be continued.....)

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I am ageless and immortal, self-refulgent and self-existent. I am one without a second and without limitations. I am the creator, protector and destroyer of worlds... I am divine, eternal and immovable. I am the internal self of all, dwelling in the hearts of all. I am supreme of all, very ancient and ever abiding. I am lustrous, bright and most beautiful of all. I am omniscient, and omnipotent and immanent in the universe, as sugar in the sugarcane; yet I am greater than the universe. I am all powerful and protector of all beings. I am the quint essence of all existence. I am pure knowledge, and the highest joy and peace incarnate. I am ever free and perfect the Supreme Spirit, and verily the Brahman which is Existence, Consciousness and Bliss... I am beyond good and evil and transcend all injunctions of duty... I am subtler than the subtle and greater than the great. I am without hands and feet, possess inconceivable power, see without eyes and hear without ears. I know myself and there can be no knower of me. I am the King of the spiritual world. I sit on the pedestal of the self... I think of nothing but my own thought.

Vedic Religion and Philosophy

Developmental stage from Polytheism to Monism

The earliest source of our information regarding the Indian thought is Veda. Veda is not a single work but a whole literature. Veda contains two parts, Mantra and Brahmanas. Many of the early Upanishads are included in Brahmanas. But because of the importance of Upanishads, they are taken as separate portion of the Veda. The period of Veda is in between 2000 and 2500 B.C.

The Philosophy and Religion of Veda can be considered in three divisions. Mantra, Brahmanas and Upanishads.

A. EARLY MANTRA (Polytheism) :

The word Mantra means hymn or Religious song. There are two divisions of hymn. Oldest and Latest. R. G. Veda and Atharvana Veda are considered as Oldest hymn. Polytheism (believing many Gods) is the characteristic feature of early Mantra. The content of the Oldest Mantra is Nature worship. The religion of the veda, various powers of Nature like Fire (Agni) Wind (Vayu) and Sun (Surya) are worshipped. Man lived in the middle of these powers of Nature and he is constantly influenced by them. These powers are personified. It is believed that the order in the world such as the regular succession of seasons or of day and night is due to the agency of these powers. Thus they are looked upon as higher beings or Gods. It is man's duty to obey and to propitiate. Thus hymns are described as chants or prayers, addressed to deified powers of Nature. The Gods thus worshipped are many. Agni the God of fire is represented as the carrier of gifts to the Gods. Uṣā or Dawn is worshipped as a Goddess and described blushing maiden persued by her lover, the sun. Veda believes that there are many Gods. But some of them are considered as more important than others. Relatively more important deities are Varuna and Indra. They are the true monarchs that support all the living beings.

INDRA :

The distinctive feature of Indra is that, he is eager to protect his devotees by vanquishing their enemies in battles. Indra is the leading deity of the hymn collections taken as a whole. Indra is brave and fierce. He is vain and boastful and is fond of intoxicating drink (soma). Indra is the protector of Aryan colour and distroyer of the dark skin. He is the thunder God and is the liberator of waters by slaying the demon of draught. He is the National God of the Indoor Aryans.

VARUNA :

Varuna is strictly follower of the high principles and is another important deity. He is essentially a God of Righteousness and is the guardian of all that is good. He is omniscient (all knowing) and is described as ever witnessing the truth, and falsehood of men. He is not only able to find out the inmost sins of man, but is also confisient and will graciously forgive the sinner. Among these two Gods i.e., Varuna and Indra. Indra is the most important God.

RTA :

There is one aspect of the idea of dignity associated with Rta. The atymological meaning of Rta is 'Cource'. It is originally meant cosmic order. The maintanance of the cosmic order is the purpose of all the Gods. Later Rta also came to mean 'Right'. Gods were conceived as preserving the world not mainly from moral chaos. The one idea is implict in the other and there is order in the Universe because, it's control is in rightous hands. Varuna is the chief supporter of Rta and infact all other Gods are supporting the Rta also.

WORLD AND GOD :

According to all these early Mantras, the world is not only governed by the Gods but also owes it's existence to them. For it is they who have created it. The world is represented as consisting of three parts. Heaven, the world of mortals and the world of intermediate reason. Each of these world has it's own guiding divinities.

MAN AND GOD :

The relation of man to the Gods is depicted as one of Complete dependence. But it is of quite an intimate kind. For we find vedic Aryans addressing their Gods as Father and Brother. The expression of love for Gods is almost a common place in Vedas. The Gods are represented as friend of the worshiper. Since the Gods are the powerful rulers of universe. Man must be devoted to them and since they are not mainly powerful but are also rightous minded. He must live a morally pure life.

The physical universe is not unreal according to the early Mantras. Thus the interest of the people in the everyday world, appears to have been quite keen for the prayers addressed to Gods are mostly for worldly prosperity : For the grant of sons, cattle and wealth.

The survival of man after death is recognised the soul is conceived as immortal, and the good and the holy, it is believed, go after death to heaven where they live a life at prefect joy in the company of the Gods. The souls of the wicked also survived after death. Now they are in the world of darkness.

B. LATER MANTRA :

The belief in a plurality of Gods, which was a characteristic feature of early vedic religion, looses it's attraction gradually. The Vedic Indian dissatisfied with the old mythology and with refering observed phenomena (world) to a multiplicity of Gods. He was seeking after not the causes of natural phenomena, but their first cause or ultimate cause. He was struggling to discover the One God that controls and rules over the many Gods. The belief in many Gods of the early hymns now becomes more or less definite monotheism in later hymns. The development of Monotheism in the later hymns is as the following.

HENOTHEISM :

In early hymns, there is an overlaping of divinities. That is, one God is very much like the other. Different Gods are explained in the same manner. As a result, there is an incomplete individualization of deities. This is so because there is the inner connection or mutual resemblence of one natural phenomena with another. For example, The sun. Fire and Dawn. Due to this incomplete individualization of deities, vedic seers were in difficulty to determine which God is intended to be praised in a hymn. But the Vedic seers were having the habit of magnifying the importance of the particular deity they are praising and representing it as supreme, ignoring for the time being the other deities altogether. This religious belief is called Henotheism. (which means belief in One God) as distinguished from monotheism (which means belief in only one God) Henotheism is a definite stage in the development from polytheism to monotheism.

MONOTHEISM :

To fulfil the conditions of monotheism, one can say to reduce the many Gods to One. By raising the most imposing of them to the rank of the supreme. But this is not followed by vedic seers. They have made an attempt to discover not one God above other Gods, but rather the common power that works behind them all. This is called philosophic Monotheism. (As to a support to this we have expressions in Vedas : "what is but one, wise people call by different names as Agni, Yama and 'Matarisvan'. The worshipful divinity of the Gods is one"). Though thus conceived that there is but one ultimate cause which is the source for the diverse phenomena of nature. Vedic seers were in confusion regarding what it's exact nature might be. But the attempts were made to characterise the ultimate cause or power by taking a collective view of the Gods or by selecting some distinguishing feature of divinity a predicate of several Gods and ascribing them to it, and personify it and regard it as the supreme God. As a result the concept of Visva-Karma maker of everything has come into existence. Visva-Karma is a God above all Gods. The ultimate cause has taken the form of Visva Karma, the logical abstraction grows into a concrete God. But even Visva-Karma is not retained as the supreme. Vedic seers were wont on shifting from one God to another God by considering them as the supreme, Prajapati, father God, the personification of the creative power of nature has also come into existence like Visva Karma. Even the concept of Prajapati ceases to appeal to Vedic Aryan. It gives rise to another concept Prana or deified breath, the cosmic counterpart of individual life and time, the maker and distroyer of all. During the Vedic period, like Visva Karma, Prajapati, Prana, many Gods successively become pre-eminent.

MONISM :

The concept of monotheism is mixed with Monism in later Mantra and it is difficult to separate them. The concept of Monotheism is such that it involves dualism. In this case the unity of Godhead which is reduced from many Gods is above and apart from the world which it makes and guides. The nature is set over against God, The concept of Monism is such that it traces the whole of existence to a single source. There are 2 distinct shades of monistic thought. One is Pantheism, which identifies nature with God. As a support to this there is an expression in Rugveda where Goddess Aditi (the Boundless) is identified with all Gods and all-men, with the sky and air in fact with whatever has been and whatever shall be. In Pantheism, the difference between God and Nature is denied. God in pantheism is not transcending nature.

But is immanent in it. The world does not proceed from God but is itself God. The another form of Monism is such that it recognises the principle of causality, it traces the whole universe to a single source. The nature of the single source is such that all being and non being, death and life, good and evil are developing within itself. It holds that the origin of universe is not because of creation by an external God, but because of a spontaneous unfolding of the first cause. This conception is impersonal and free from all mythological. elements. the ultimate case is addressed as That one (Tad Ekam).

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- Dr. I. S. Kumbar, Ph.D.,
Editorial Committee Member.
Pathway to God, A.C.P.R.

□□

Our only pursuit should be to follow the will of God and meditate on Him. If we just do this, I think He will come to our help in all circumstances. So long as we are serving God, we are immortal. Our lives me in the custody of God. We may throw away our mental coil when He wills. We cannot die so long as he wants us to serve Him.

Spiritual life... is the end not merely of my own spiritual existence... but of Humanity at large, which is consciously or unconsciously pursuing the Pathway to God. How far we shall be able to achieve such an ideal, remains entirely at the will of God. It is only our business to wait, to watch, to work and to pray.

(from Gurudev's Letters)

Book Review

Classical Indian Philosophy of Mind : by Kisor Kumar Chakravarti, *Publisher : Motilal Banarasidass, Bungalow Road, Jawahar Nagar, Delhi-110 007, 2001, Pages : XX + 309, Price Rs.350/-*

Among the six systems of Indian Philosophy, namely, Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika, Sāṁkhya and Yoga, Pūrvamīmāṁsā and vedanta, Nyāya occupies an important position. Goutama was the propounder of the Nyāya school of thought. Arguments for the self occupy a central position in the Nyāyasūtra. This is not surprising if we keep in mind that the self plays a pivotal role in Hinduism, Goutama has declared release *(apavarga)* from worldly bondage and suffering to be the ultimate goal of life *(parama-puruṣārtha).* This goal can be achieved only by removing false beliefs (mithyā-jñāna) about the primary *(mukhya)* knowledge (prameya). The self is clearly the cornerstone of the fundamental Hindu doctrines of after-life, rebirth, transmigration, karma and God. The two wrong views that the self does not exist *(nairātmya-vāda)* and that the self is the body *(dehātma-vāda)* are discussed and saught to be refuted.

The Nyāya does not hold that consciousness is the essence of the self. In the Nyāya view self alone is the substratum of consciousness, but consciousness or thought is an adventitious (āgantuka) quality, and originates in the self only when other necessary causal conditions are available. So far as consciousness is concerned, there is no empirical evidence that the self remains conscious in states of deep sleep, coma and the like. Hence the view that consciousness is an adventitious quality of the self.

Concentration *(praṇidhāna)* is fixing the inner sense (mind) on what is sought to be remembered. This involves not to let the inner sense be distracted by other things, and have it focused on the object of remembrance or some distinctive feature of the object sought to be remembered. Practice means the repeated awareness of the same thing.

Pleasure and pain are different from each other. Why? Because the causal conditions of liking and disliking are different. The garland, sandal etc., are liked. The snake, thorn etc., are disliked. There is never the experience of both pleasure and pain in the same self at the same time. While being favourably disposed, a contented look is the effect of pleasure, sadness of the face is the effect of suffering.

According to Buddhism, self does not exist. There is only an aggregate of particular fleeting internal states. But memory is inexplicable without a permanent self. One cannot remember what has not been seen before. One cannot remember what has been seen by someone else. Since the self as the unitary agent of both seeing and remembering must endure through time, it is proved that the self is permanent.

The self cannot be identified with any of the external sense organs or their aggregate. It cannot be identified with the inner sense organ *(manas)* also.

The inner sense is not perceived. Like the self it too is inferred. We do not notice more than one thing at a time. One may be sitting on the chair, at the same time reading a book, hearing a clock ticking away and so on. But it is not that all those perceptions of touching, seeing and hearing take place at the same time. Rather they take place in very quick succession. We do not often notice the succession, as they are rapidly succeeding perceptions.

The inner sense is often required to account for detachment or distraction. Thus we may be oblivious of pain in the foot because of being preoccupied with something else. If one fails to be aware of the pain in spite of having the opportunity for being so, it is reasonable to infer that the said failure is due to the failure of an internal attention organ that may be called the inner sense. The existence of an attention organ further draws support from the fact that our attention can be under voluntary control and our ability to concentrate *(ekāgratā)* with the twin results of paying closer need to selected stimuli and disregarding other stimuli, can be heightened through training and practice *(abhyāsa).* The inner sense is involved in the origin of any conscious states whatsoever, it is an indispensable instrument that the self needs to be aware of anything.

The other main reason for admitting the inner sense is that we have internal perceptions of our cognitions. Since there are internal perceptions without the involvement of the external senses, and since perception requires an instrument *(karaṇa),* the inner sense is inferred as the instrument of internal perception. The inner sense has its proper objects, namely, the internal states.

While the self is the substratum of consciousness, the body is the receptacle *(āyatana)* of worldly enjoyment *(bhoga)*. The body is not the enjoyer, for it is unconscious. The self being conscious is the enjoyer. But the self must be associated with a body to have enjoyment. The self must be associated with a body for it to be alive. The body can exist without the self, but then it is dead. The self too can exist without the body but then, in the Nyāya view it is unconscious and devoid of all enjoyment. The self and the body must be together in order to have a living being.

The self is eternal. This implies that the self is both beginningless and endless. The self may very well exist both before and after the body. Further as the agent of remembrance, the self must remain the same throughout the lifetime of an individual. It may very well be associated with many different bodies in many different lifetimes. Thus the self may have gone through many lives before the present one and may go through many more after the present one. For an eternal self changing bodies in different lifetimes, and moving from an old body to a new body is like a person discarding worn out clothes and wearing a new one.

Everybody displays from very early in the childhood certain preferences. Some like music, some like to paint, some like sports etc. These preferences are not always explained by family traits or environmental influences. Further there are prodigies who have exceptional skills, such as playing some musical instrument, doing difficult mathematical calculations, with very little or no training. These are skills that an average person needs a lot of training and practice to master. But prodigies master them with little training or practice. Since skills require practice and since a prodigy has the skill without the benefit of practice in the present life, a previous life when the prodigy had the practice should be inferred.

In the daytime we carry on our activities with the help of the light of the sun. In the nighttime we use the light of the moon. When there is no light of the moon, we may use the light of fire. When there is no fire, we may use the light of speech, that is, communicate through language in darkness. But when there is no speech, there is still the light of self *(ātmā-jyoti).* In other words the self does not require the light of the sun or of the moon or of fire or speech or anything else to reveal itself. The self as pure consciousness is itself revealing. This is the Vedānta view.

In the highest level, knowing and being become one. According to Advaita, cognition at the highest level is the direct knowledge of *brahman* of the form "I am *brahman*". This takes place through a final modification of the inner sense after the knower has completed all the necessary preparation. Three levels of knowing may here be specially taken note of. First there is knowledge of *brahman* from the study of Upanishadic statements such as "That thou art". This is called the level of hearing *(śravaṇa)* the truth. Then the doubt about the truth of what is heard or read is removed through a process of ratiocination. This is the second level called reasoned knowledge *(manana).* Finally there is continuous succession of the knowledge that self is *brahman.* This is the third level called meditation *(nididhyāsana)* of the truth. This final knowledge carries complete conviction, removes all kinds of duality and ignorance that the self is different from *brahman* and accomplishes the unity of the self and *brahman* that is always there. This removes all desires for everything else and bondage is overcome. Accordingly knowledge is the proper means of liberation.

The book is highly technical in its approach and analysis. The author has mentioned the views of many Western scholars also on the subject.

- Dr. B. R. Modak

"Rukmini Niwas", 38, Ranade Colony,
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◻◻

Let us see the process by which the spiritual illumination is to be achieved. Here सत्त्व is the cow which feeds on the यमs and नियमs and yields milk in the form of pure धर्म.

From this milk the curd of मुदिता is to be produced with the help of धृतिजावनु, and this to be subjected to the process of churning, which may be called विचार (विवेक), and the result is production of butter in the form of विरागor वैराग्य. We may well compare here the celebrated discussion on 'विवेक वैराग्य' in the twelfth Chapter of Ramdas's दासबोध (12-4).

– **(Gurudev Ranade in Pathway to God in Hindi Literature p.71)**

Obituary

With a sad heart we convey the news of the demise of our All India Council Chairman Shri. N. S. Deshpande, to our readers. The demise was unexpected, sudden and tragic to all of us. We had assembled in the ACPR auditorium in the evening of 6th of June to observe the Punya-tithi of Gurudeo Ranade. After offering flowers and salutations to the photograph of Gurudeo Ranade, ourselves and the audience took the respective seats. Shri. N. S. Deshpande was the Chief speaker on the occasion. He paid obeisance to Gurudeo and started his speech. He was narrating the aims and objects of ACPR and the great responsibility that has fallen on all of us to fulfill the desire of Gurudeo to spread the knowledge of spirituality all over the world. In this context, he read out excerpts from the pamphet received the same day regarding the 21st World Conference of Philosophy to be held in Istambul in August 2003.

After about 15-20 minutes of speech, we saw that his words slowed, he leaned on one side and showed signs of collapse. He was immediately rushed to hospital but was of no avail.

Scriptures say that 'fortunate is the man who leaves the body with the name of God or Guru on his lips'. Shri. N. S. Deshpande was narrating the greatness of Gurudeo and his work, while he departed. He must be a great Punyatma to have an end of life in this manner.

I remember the instance noted in the biography of Paramhansa Swami Yoganand who preached the importance of yoga in USA for twenty five years. His end came when he collapsed while delivering his last lecture on Yoga to the American audience with the Indian ambassador in chair. Such an end comes only to those who are blessed by the Lord Himself.

Shri. N. S. Deshpande was initiated by Gurudeo Dr. Ranade at his early age of fifteen years. He was deeply interested in philosophy and religion. He was a voratious reader and a Sanskrit scholar. He was born on 24th January 1939 at Shedbal in Athani Taluka in Belgaum District. He was an onstanding student in High School and College and became a first rank holder in M.A. (Sociology) and an M.Phil by research. He secured first position in a number of state level and all India level open debate competitions, and became a very distinguished orator and speaker. He was invited to join the Institute of social sciences at Kashi Vidyapeetha at Varanasi, which he served as professor and head of the department of sociology. He was a guide to many students of Ph.D. He wrote a number of articles and an acclaimed book on demography. He was a member of the All India Sociological Conference and was conferred with the Membership of PWPC (Professors World Peace Conference) in recognition of his outstanding academic brilliance.

Recently, he was busy in making a compendium of Gurudeo Ranade's writings, which are published and also those which have remained unpublished. After his retirement, he settled in Sangli but used to travel to Varanasi for lectures not to mention his tours to Belgaum for ACPR work and meetings. He has left behind his wife, a married son and a married daugther.

May his soul rest in peace.

- P. D. Dharwarkar

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Activities of A.C.P.R.

Quarterly Report for the period ending 30-6-2001

I. A.C.P.R. Belgaum has started a series lectures on Comparative Philosophy and Religion in A.C.P.R.'s premises since 17-3-2001. The lectures are being held on every Saturday between 6.30 p.m. to 7.30 p.m.

The following persons delivered lectures in the A.C.P.R. during this period.

Name	**Subject**
1. Dr. I. S. Kumbar	1. Fundamentals of Philosophy 2. Vedic Philosophy 3. Atman, Jeevan & Brahman
2. Sri. P. D. Dharwarkar	1. Power of Mind
3. Sri. Rayalingeshwar Maharaj	1. Das-Bodha
4. Sri. S. S. Kelkar	1. Upanishadic Philosophy
5. Advocate Sri. Ashok M. Potdar	1. Philosophy and Law
6. Brahmacharini Shraddha Chaitanya of Chinmaya Mission	1. Jivana and Vedanta

Justice Sri. B. K. Sangalad, Judge, High Court of Karnataka, Bangalore, paid a visit to the 'Academy' on 30-4-2001.

II. We thank the following Donors

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Date : 30-6-2001

M. B. Zirali,
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(Contd.. From Cover Page 2)

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